
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program

Background

The Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant (RRLG) Program, under the purview of the Department of Transportation (DOT), is intended to improve rail facilities so as to spur economic development and job growth, provide assistance to railroads, and maintain and improve the rail system. During the 2005 Legislative Session, the 81st General Assembly enacted HF 875 (FY 2006 Infrastructure Appropriations Act), which effectively combined three rail assistance and rail economic development programs to create the RRLG Fund and its corresponding Program.

Purpose

The RRLG Program provides financial assistance to rail economic development projects, which may include restoration, conservation, improvement, and construction of railroad main lines, branch lines, switching yards, sidings, rail connections, intermodal yards, highway grade separations, and other railroad-related improvements. As of 2012, funding from the RRLG Program may also be used for rail port planning and development studies. Projects funded through the RRLG Program have typically been to construct or improve industrial spur lines and provide other rail improvements for ethanol and biodiesel plants and other industrial parks throughout the State.

To qualify for funding, projects must be within one of three categories: targeted job creation with immediate and direct job opportunities, rail network improvements for existing rail lines and service, or rail port planning and development studies. Industries, railroads, local governments, and economic development agencies are eligible to apply for loans or grants. Applications are made to the DOT Office of Rail Transportation and approved by the Transportation Commission, although the General Assembly has previously made specific project allocations. For targeted job creation projects, the applicant is required to provide a 20.0% match for loans and a 50.0% match for grants. For rail network improvement projects, no direct job creation is required as the projects support existing rail lines, but only loans are available to the applicant.

State Funding History

Prior to FY 2006, funding for rail assistance was provided from the General Fund. After the creation of the RRLG Program, the funding source became primarily the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF). Funding levels vary, and in estimated FY 2019, \$1.0 million was appropriated from the RIIF. Funds available in the RRLG Program during a fiscal year may exceed the amount appropriated due to loan repayments. Additionally, funds appropriated do not revert, but remain available for use in the RRLG Program indefinitely.

More Information

Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program: iowadot.gov/iowarail/financial-assistance/rrlqp
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Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code section [327H.20A](#)
2005 Iowa Acts, [House File 875](#)
Iowa Administrative Code [761—822](#)

Budget Unit Number

645039S0017

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